

Resources and Land Use

Prepare to Read

Objectives

In this section you will

1. Learn about the major resources of the United States.
2. Find out about the major resources of Canada.

Taking Notes

As you read the section, look for details about the resources of the United States and Canada. Copy the table below and write each detail under the correct subject heading.

Resource	United States	Canada
Farmland		
Water		
Energy and minerals		
Forests		



Target Reading Skill

Preview and Ask

Questions Before you read this section, preview the headings and photographs to see what the section is about. Write one or two questions that will help you understand or remember something important in the section. Then read to answer your questions.

Key Terms

- **alluvial soil** (uh LOO vee ul soyl) *n.* fertile topsoil left by a river, especially after a flood
- **agribusiness** (AG ruh biz niz) *n.* a large company that runs huge farms
- **hydroelectricity** (hy droh ee lek TRIH suh tee) *n.* electric power produced by moving water
- **fossil fuel** (FAHS ul FYOO ul) *n.* a fuel formed over millions of years from animal and plant remains

Surrounded by majestic redwood forests, Carlotta, California, has little more than a gas station and a general store. Yet on one day in September 1996, police arrested more than 1,000 people there. Was Carlotta filled with outlaws like some old Wild West town? No, but it was the scene of a showdown. A logging company wanted to cut down some of the oldest redwood trees in the world. Protesters wanted to preserve the forest and the animals that live there. Both sides believed in the importance of natural resources. But they disagreed strongly about how to use them. As in Carlotta, people all over North America use their natural resources for recreation, industry, and energy.

**Redwood National Park,
California**



Resources of the United States

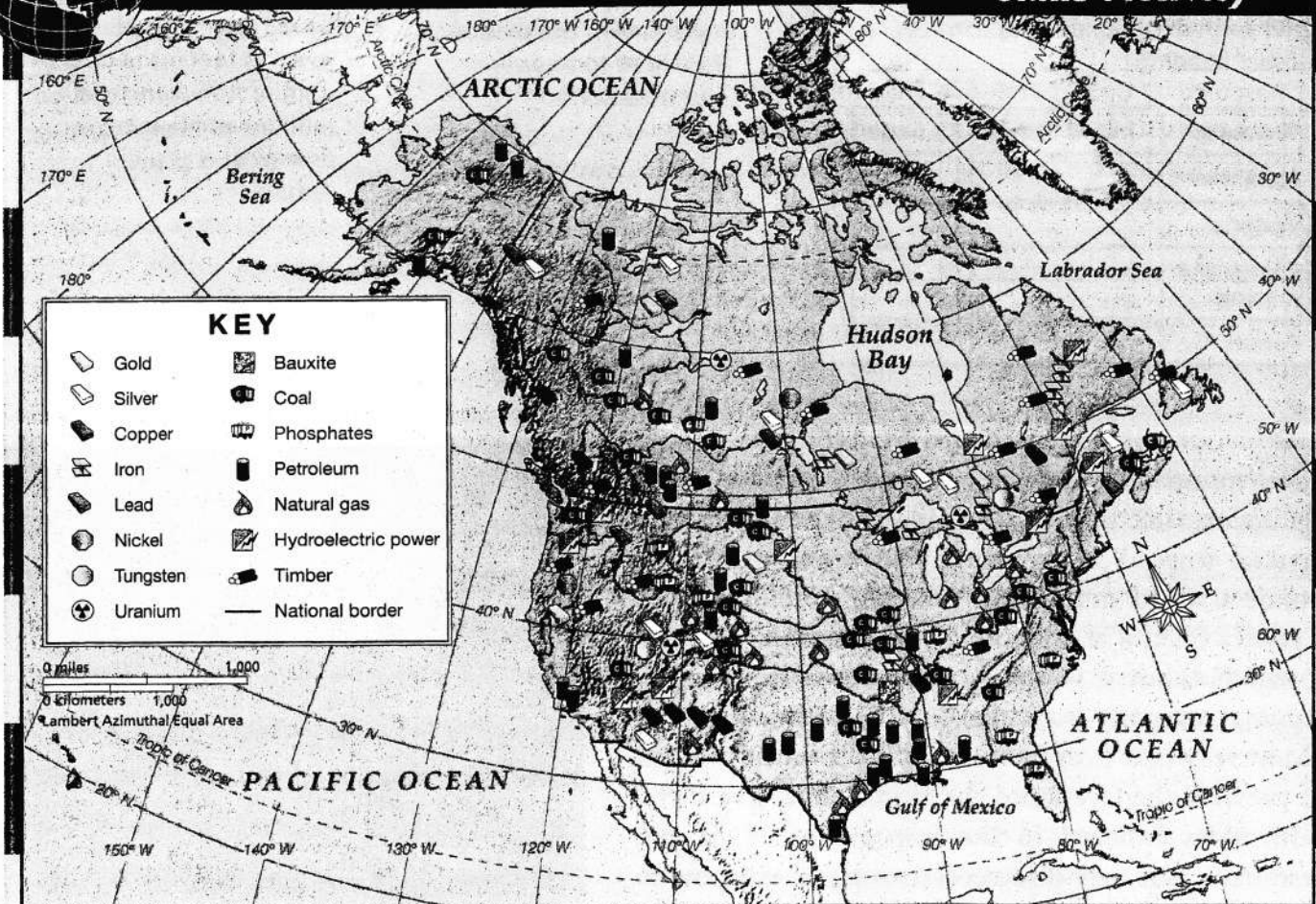
Native Americans, pioneers, and explorers in North America knew centuries ago that it was a land of plenty. Abundant resources helped to build two of the world's leading economies.

Farmland Both the Midwest and the South have rich, dark soils that are suitable for farming. Along the Mississippi and other river valleys are **alluvial** (uh LOO vee ul) **soils**, the fertile topsoil left by a river after a flood. Until the 1900s, most American farms were owned by families. Since then, large companies have bought many family farms. Southern California's Imperial Valley has vast vegetable fields operated by agribusinesses. An **agribusiness** is a large company that runs huge farms.



U.S. and Canada: Natural Resources

MAP MASTER™ Skills Activity



Place Both the United States and Canada are rich in natural resources.

List Which resources do the United States and Canada share?

Draw Conclusions How does Canada's location contribute to its ability to export goods and resources?

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Water Water is a vital resource. People need water to drink and to grow crops. Factories rely on water for many industrial processes, including cooling machinery. Both industry and farmers use rivers to transport goods. The Mississippi, Ohio, and Missouri rivers are important shipping routes.

Water is used for other purposes, too. Dams along many rivers produce **hydroelectricity** (hy droh ee lek TRIH suh tee), or electric power generated by moving water. The Grand Coulee (KOO lee) Dam on the Columbia River in the state of Washington produces more hydroelectricity than any other dam in the United States.



An irrigation system watering several fields on a California farm

Forests People have claimed that before Europeans arrived, a squirrel could leap from one tree to another all the way from the Atlantic Coast to the Mississippi River. That is no longer true, but America's forests are still an important resource. Large forests extend across the Pacific Northwest, the South, the Appalachians, and areas around the Great Lakes. They produce lumber, wood pulp for paper, and fine wood for furniture.

Energy and Mineral Resources The United States produces and consumes more fossil fuels than any other country. **Fossil fuels** are sources of energy that formed from animal and plant remains. Petroleum, natural gas, and coal are all fossil fuels. Although the United States imports most of its oil from other countries, the biggest oil reserves in North America are along the northern coast of Alaska. A pipeline carries oil from the wells in Prudhoe Bay to the port of Valdez in the south. From here, giant tankers carry the oil away to be refined.



The Trans-Alaska Pipeline Workers prepare a section of the 800-mile (1,280-kilometer) pipeline for welding.

Identify Effects How did the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline produce growth for both the population and the economy of Alaska?



Preview and Ask Questions

Ask yourself a question about the paragraph at the right.

Natural Gas Natural gas is a mixture of gases found beneath Earth's surface. To be usable, natural gas must be processed after it is removed from the ground. Its major use is as a fuel. Natural gas heats many homes in the United States. Large gas fields can be found in the Texas Panhandle, Louisiana, and Alaska. Natural gas can be transported by pipeline or in specially designed tanker ships.

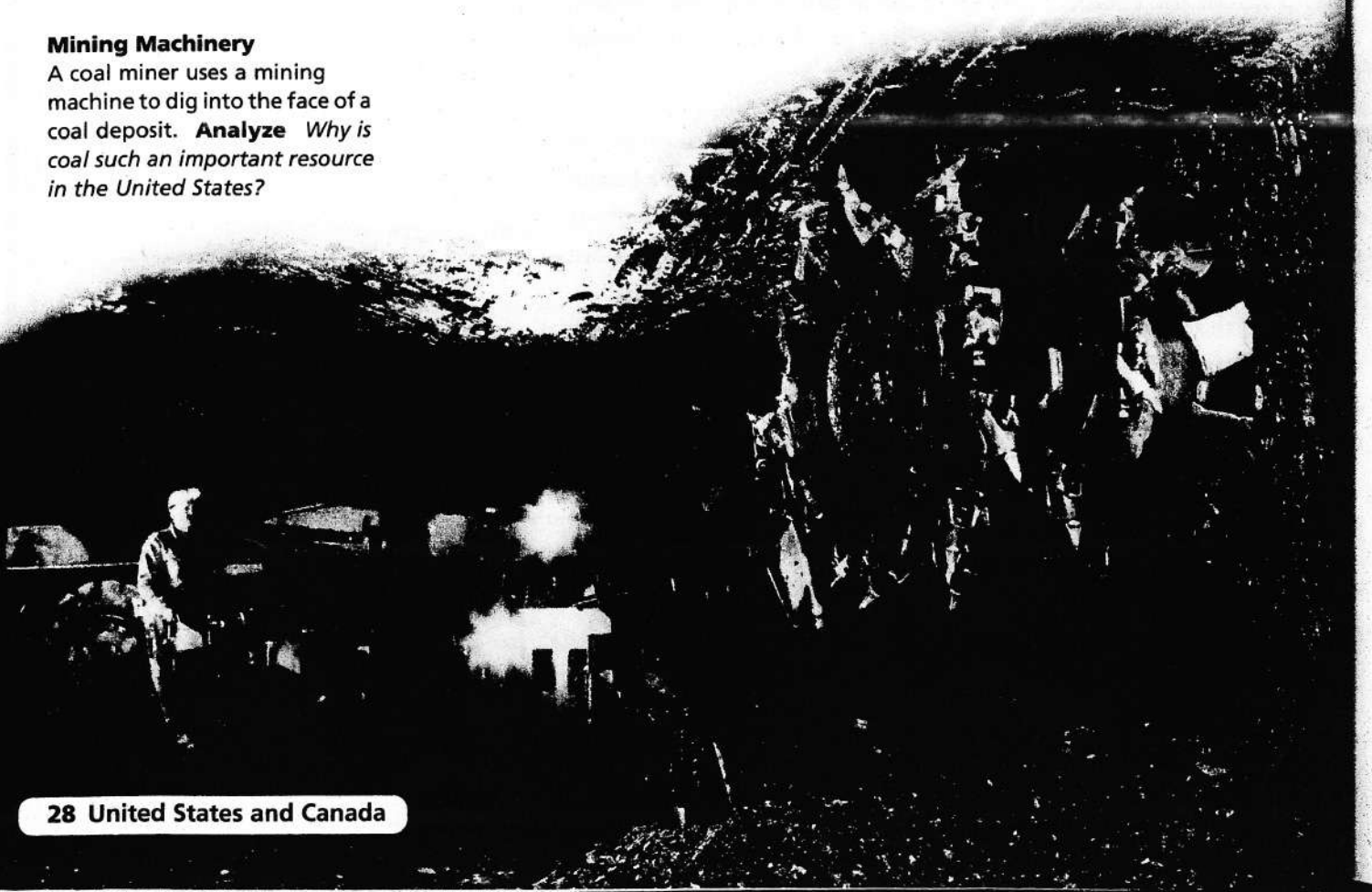
Coal Coal is another important fossil fuel. Many power plants burn coal to produce electricity. It is also used to produce steel, as well as to heat and power industrial facilities. The United States has about 2,500 coal mines, totaling nearly 25 percent of the world's coal reserves. Over the past 30 years, modern mining equipment has nearly tripled the productivity of these mines. Wyoming, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania are the main coal-producing states in the country.

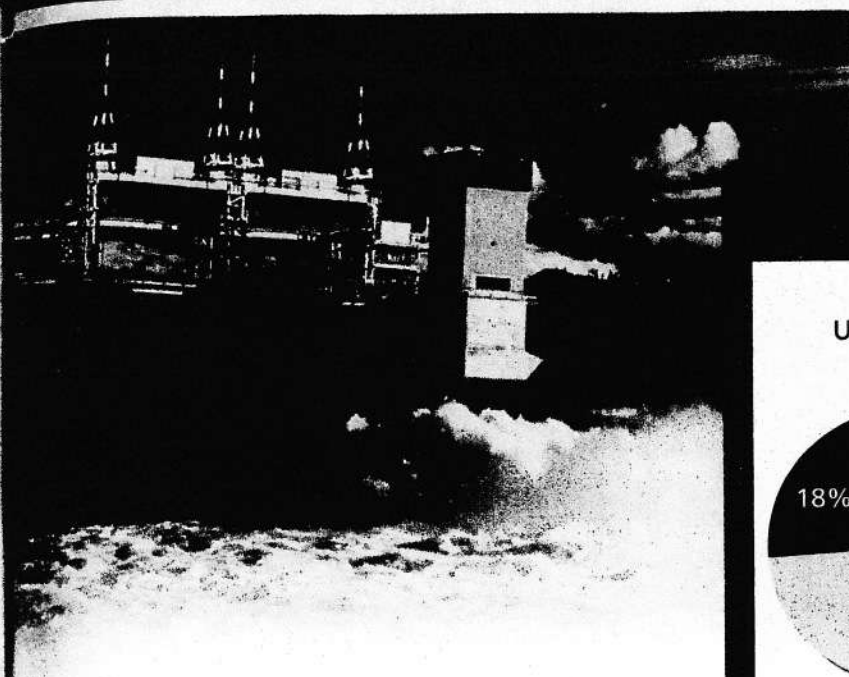
Mining In addition, the United States has valuable deposits of copper, gold, iron ore, and lead. Mining accounts for a small percentage of the country's economy and employs less than one percent of its workers. But these minerals are very important to other industries and have fueled industrial expansion.

✓ **Reading Check** Why is water an important natural resource?

Mining Machinery

A coal miner uses a mining machine to dig into the face of a coal deposit. **Analyze** Why is coal such an important resource in the United States?





Resources of Canada

Canada's first European settlers earned their living as fur trappers, loggers, fishers, and farmers. Today, the economic picture has changed. Less than five percent of Canada's workers earn their living in these ways.

Farmland Less than 10 percent of Canada's land is suitable for farming. Most is located in the Prairie Provinces. This region produces most of Canada's wheat and beef. The St. Lawrence Lowlands are another major agricultural region. This area produces grains, milk, vegetables, and fruits.

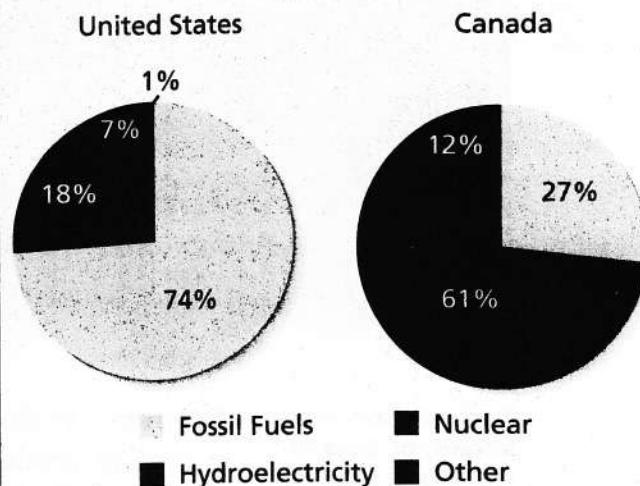
Water Canada has more lakes than any other country in the world. About nine percent of the world's fresh water is in Canada. Before the first railroads were built in the 1800s, the only way to reach some parts of the country was by water. Today, the St. Lawrence and Mackenzie rivers serve as important shipping routes.

Minerals and Energy Resources The Canadian Shield contains much of Canada's mineral wealth. Most of the nation's iron ore comes from mines near the Quebec-Newfoundland border. The region also has large deposits of gold, silver, zinc, copper, and uranium. The Prairie Provinces, particularly Alberta, have large oil and natural gas deposits.

Canada harnesses the rivers of Quebec Province to make hydroelectricity. These rivers generate enough hydroelectric power that some of it can be sold to the northeastern United States.

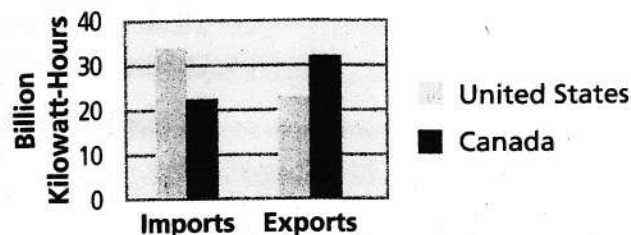
Electric Power

Sources



SOURCE: DK World Desk Reference

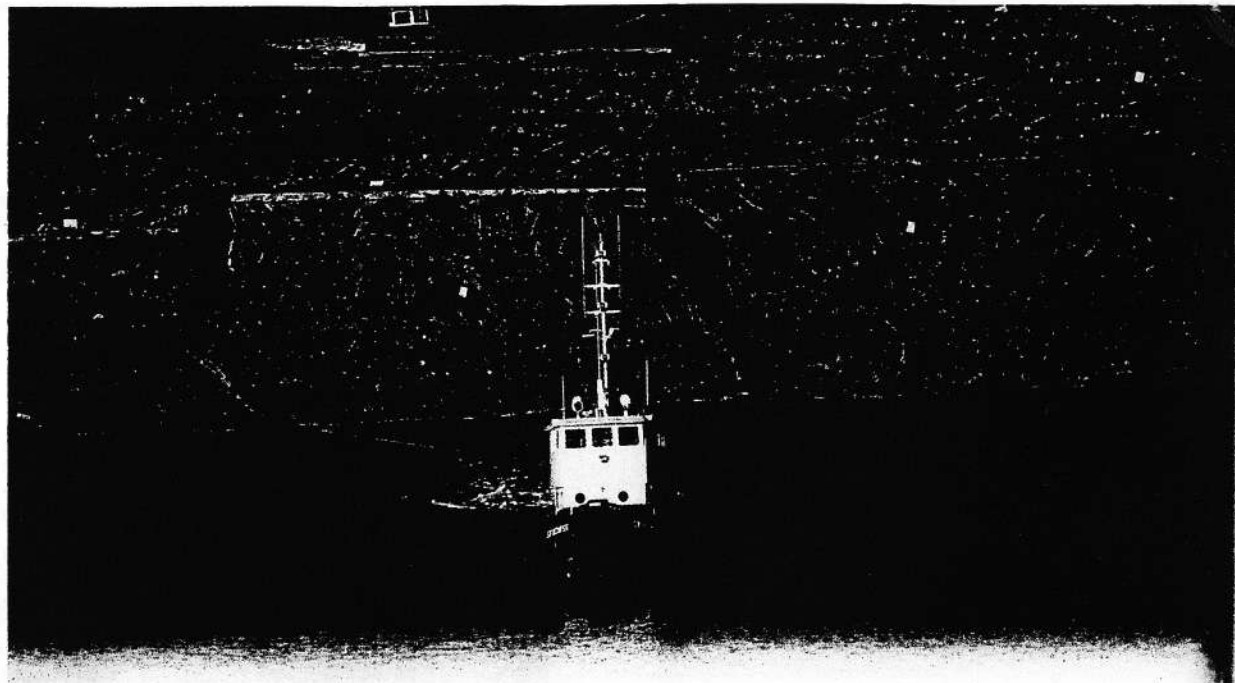
Trade



SOURCE: Energy Information Administration, National Energy Board of Canada

Chart Skills

Both the United States and Canada use fossil fuels to produce electricity. Fossil fuels are nonrenewable resources, meaning that once used they are not easily replaced. The United States and Canada also make use of renewable resources such as the hydroelectricity produced by the dam above. **Name** What energy source produces the largest percentage of Canada's electricity? **Analyze** Which nation is more dependent on the other for its energy? Explain.



Tugboats tow huge booms, or lines of connected floating logs, harvested from Canada's forests.

Forests With almost half its land covered in forests, Canada is a leading producer and exporter of timber products. These products include lumber, paper, plywood, and wood pulp. The climate in British Columbia produces Canada's densest tall-timber forests. Large amounts of rain and a long growing season contribute to the growth of large evergreens with hard wood ideal for construction lumber. The provinces of Ontario and Quebec also produce large amounts of timber.

✓ **Reading Check** What resources are found in the Canadian Shield?



Section 3 Assessment

Key Terms

Review the key terms at the beginning of this section. Use each term in a sentence that explains its meaning.



Target Reading Skill

What questions did you ask that helped you to learn and remember something from this section?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. (a) **List** Describe the major natural resources of the United States.

(b) **Explain** How have energy resources shaped the economy and the standard of living of the United States?

(c) **Infer** What economic challenges might a country with few natural resources face?

2. (a) **Note** How much of Canada's land can be used for farming?

(b) **Summarize** How is water used as a resource in Canada?

(c) **Compare** Based on what you know about the physical geography of the two countries, in what ways do you think the resources are similar?

Writing Activity

What do you think is the most important resource in the United States and Canada? Write a paragraph explaining your choice.

Writing Tip Be sure to include examples, details, facts, and reasons that support the main idea of your paragraph.